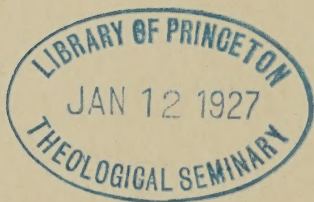
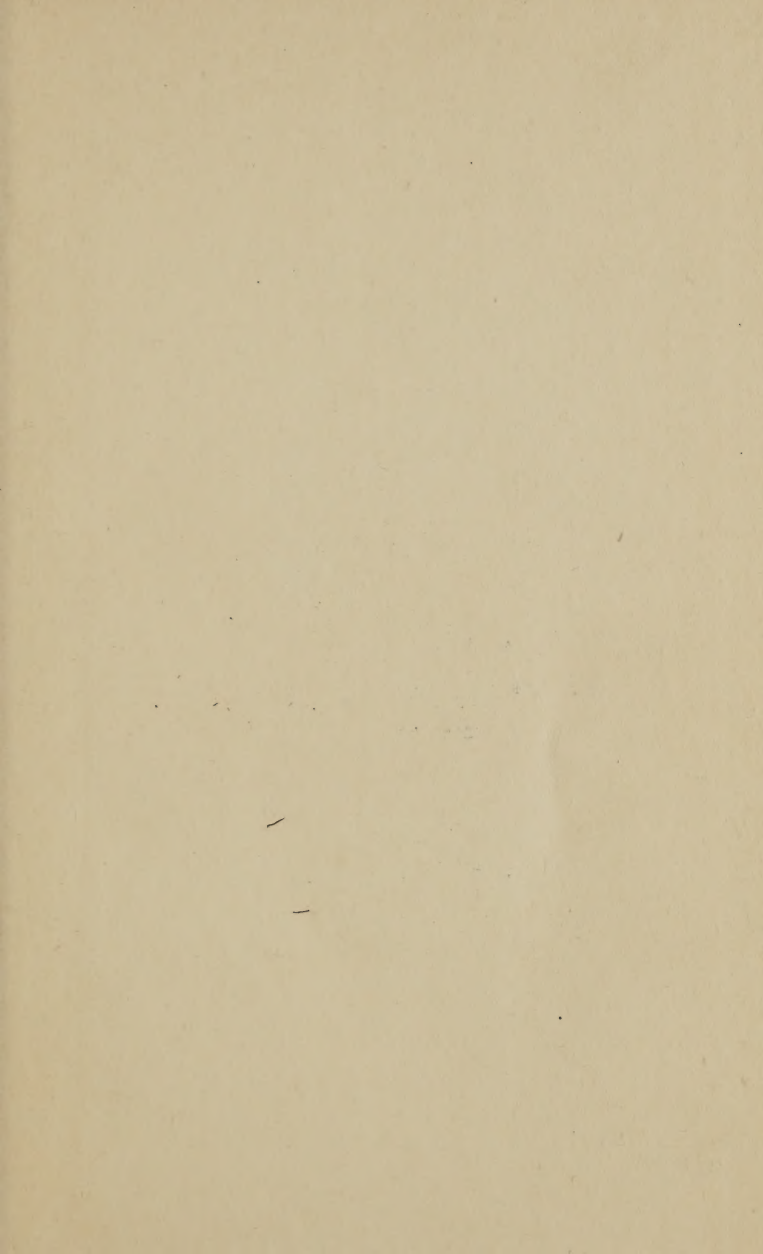


THE SINLESS INCARNATION

FRANCIS WESLEY WARNE



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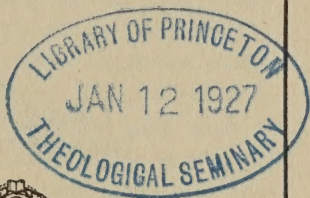
A TRIBUTE TO THE TRIUMPHANT

THE SINLESS INCARNATION

BY

FRANCIS WESLEY WARNE

One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church



The Methodist Book Concern

New York

Cincinnati

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DEDICATION

DEDICATED to the thousands of our Indian ministers and workers, who on very small salaries are facing opposition, persecution, and a religion hoary with centuries when Paul preached on Mars' Hill, a religion more powerful, philosophical and with a genius for absorbing other religions greater than any religion faced even by the apostles. The false religions Paul faced are dead centuries ago, but Hinduism is alive and guiding the religious destiny of two hundred and twenty million people. One of the greatest stories of missionary heroism is yet to be written, setting forth the sacrifices, courage, faith, and victories of our Indian ministers.

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INTRODUCTION—WHY PUBLISHED IN AMERICA?

To interest a boy in an automobile you would not first show him only some piece of the machinery, but the automobile as a whole in action. Then when he knows the powers and wonders of the auto he will the more easily be induced to study with interest its individual parts. On this principle about ten years ago I wrote a little book for India, with the purpose in mind that a non-Christian in an hour or so of reading would get a full-length portrait of the Christians' Christ. I have called it **THE SINLESS INCARNATION**.

Recently an edition of about 50,000 in the Hindi language was exhausted, and I decided before the publication of the new edition to revise the manuscript. Together with this came the thought, "Why not make a duplicate copy and offer it to American readers?" For reasons such as follow, I finally, though hesitatingly, decided to do so:

First among the reasons was a hope that it may give the supporters of missions a clearer idea of how the missionaries present their message to the non-Christian world and reveal the adaptability of the gospel message to the conditions of the Christless nations.

Then I thought if home readers could and would forget for the time their knowledge of the Bible and read this outline story of the incarnation as news,

as it is to India's millions, it would give the gospel story a fresh interest even to them.

Hinduism among the unlettered masses has been perpetuated through the centuries by those who have learned orally and can tell the stories of their gods. Many of our missionaries and Indian ministers give much of their time to telling gospel stories to our workers and teaching them how to tell the unlettered villagers these stories, and how to retell them. Each story falls naturally into its proper relation to the life of Christ as a whole, after his life has been seen in the whole as we try to present it in this little book.

I said one day to one of our W. F. M. S. missionaries, our greatest enthusiast for story-telling, "Do you not think you are making a mistake in giving less time to preaching and more to story-telling?" She answered, without a moment's hesitation, "No, for the gospel stories will yet supplant the stories of the Hindu gods and become the folklore of the villages of India, where ninety per cent of India's millions live." To help those who support missions to see this in its real setting, I will give some examples of its working.

I remember being at a chaudhri meeting, where over two hundred chaudhries, or village headmen, were present for several days, and representing about ten thousand Christians living in the villages where there were thousands of inquirers. These chaudhries were being taught in order the stories of Christ's life. The day I was present they were being taught the story of the incarnation, and were so far on that in turns they were telling it to each

other and being corrected and directed by the missionary. They were telling it with many interesting Oriental touches on the outline of my chapter "The Angelic Announcement," beginning with Gabriel's announcement to Mary of the divine overshadowing and the divine conception. Then the story of the star, representing the heavenly bodies, the shepherds representing the laboring millions, the Wise Men representing the educated. Then as a climax the angelic hosts in heavenly song announcing glad tidings of great joy to all peoples, including themselves as untouchables with all the rest and just as good as the rest.

As I sat and listened Christ was by these humble villagers lifted infinitely above all their old gods of wood and stone. They rejoiced, wept, shouted, and gave me a new conception of the story of the incarnation. I began to think the missionary lady was right, they would supplant the old and become India's folklore. I am writing this at the Christmas season, and missionaries who spent Christmas away out in a country village wrote: "Every house has been freshly cleaned and decorated for the occasion. All through the night from the little tent in the grove we can hear the sound of musical instruments and the songs of praise to the Babe of Bethlehem. One has a feeling that if all the missionaries and paid workers were withdrawn, the knowledge of Christ would not die out." This all happened in a village that had once been noted as a den of robbers. I preached from a platform only a few feet from a tree under which there was once an altar devoted to the worship of Kali, the goddess

of blood. Then they had twenty-four babies baptized on the day of the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. Then out of their poverty they gave a collection at their own request for the "Warne Bareilly Baby Fold." Is this not Christianity taking hold of the villages of India?

I remember being at an Epworth League Day in an Indian district superintendent's district. No other missionary was present. The Christians had dramatized that matchless parable that turns the teaching of Hinduism topsy-turvy, in the Western world inaccurately called the prodigal son, but which will be renamed in India the "Parable of God's Love." They had made great preparation with Oriental colors, settings, and music. But when they came to the place where the elder brother returned, they were not satisfied to stop where the New Testament stops, but they went out, got hold of the elder brother, brought him in, got him down at the penitent bench, had him converted, and had a great family reunion and cleaned up the whole situation. This is the most popular of the parables. The feeding of the multitudes with the loaves and fishes in hungry India makes a good second. I remember being at a wedding in a church where there was a missionary boy, whose companions had been Indian Christian children. I saw him watching with intense interest the church doors, his eyes blazing with excitement. Then he exclaimed after the bride and her five bridesmaids came in, "They have forgotten to close the doors to keep the foolish virgins out." That is the way the gospel stories grip the imagination of India.

But when they come to the story of the crucifixion it is wonderful. Here let me insert that when you come to read in the body of this little book, and particularly the chapter on "From Gethsemane to Calvary," to the Western reader it will seem unduly drawn out, but please remember it was written to meet the Indian situation. For those who have no Christian background, to use a figure from photography, I made a longer exposure to secure a truer impression. Accept this in advance as my explanation and apology for so much realistic detail.

I remember being again at an Indian district superintendent's District Conference; no other missionary was present. I preached one night out under the stars on the crucifixion, along the line you will find in this book. When I had finished the whole audience fell on their faces, wept and groaned, it seemed to me for twenty minutes. I had never witnessed just such a scene. Then suddenly the Holy Spirit fell upon them and such rejoicing as followed could scarce have been at the original Pentecost. They composed hymns of praise as they sang. I remember one preacher sang a prophetic song, composed while he sang, foretelling the conversion of Tibet. Three or four fell on the ground and had the "jerks," just as Peter Cartwright describes as occurring in some of his camp meetings. It was indeed a wonderful night of victory.

Then how shall I describe their Oriental telling of the story of the resurrection, the forty days, the ascension, and Pentecost, and so on to the end. I hope enough has been suggested to help our good

people at home who support us to see the way we exalt Jesus and the message we use to reach the people. Please try and read it all from this angle, when you read my simple outline of the life of the Sinless One, the world's Redeemer.

Among earlier missionary writers of tracts and books to be read by non-Christians in India it was all too common to severely criticize and even ridicule the religious beliefs of India.

The rebound criticism was to the effect that such literature judges Hinduism by the most objectionable things within it, and sets forth the best in Christianity in contrast with the worst in other religions. It must be confessed that wherever that was true such criticism was just. The thought of such authors was that such literature would destroy faith in other religions, but even granted destruction is of little value in the Christian cause. Total loss of faith in Hinduism does not make a Hindu a Christian. A Christian is made out of a Hindu only on the principle of "The expulsive power of a new affection." That is when he sees "The Sinless Incarnation" so superior to those of Hinduism that Christ wins his heart. Hindus have so many systems of philosophy in their own religion that they do not easily fall in love with Christian philosophy, but their warm hearts are won by the story of the loving, sympathetic, helpful, suffering Son of man and God, in his incarnation.

It was with ideas like these in the background that **THE SINLESS INCARNATION** was written and sent out among the people of India. One often has surprises and here is one: In writing this book I had

chiefly Hindus in mind, and was pleasantly surprised to learn that the head Mohammedan Mulvi in a great Mohammedan state had THE SINLESS INCARNATION in Persian Urdu, bound up with his Koran. He gave as his reason that it was the first presentation of the central truths of Christianity that he had found that did not make him angry because of its attacks on Mohammedanism. For the same reason, because of no ridiculing of the Hindu religion, I have heard of orthodox Hindus dying with my story of the love of God and the eternal hope of the gospel under their pillows.

My first chapter, "Incarnations in Hinduism," is written wholly for home readers, and the book as published in India begins with Chapter II.

F. W. W.

CHAPTER I

INCARNATIONS IN HINDUISM

INCARNATIONS have a central place in Hinduism. An authoritative book called *The Crown of Hinduism* is so written that the author says, "This book is an attempt to discover and state as clearly as possible what relationship subsists between Hinduism and Christianity." It traces resemblances and contrasts between the two religions, and on the place of incarnation in Hinduism the author in a summary says, "It is one of the most powerful forces working in Hinduism," and adds:

That the doctrine of incarnation, which appeared originally in the ancient Vishnuite sect, should have found its way into almost every division of the Hindu people, and into every corner of eastern Asia, is the strongest possible testimony to the religious value it possesses for the Hindu and the Asiatic spirit. Nor can there be any doubt as to what element in the doctrine it is that has given the movement its power; it is the belief that God actually appeared as a man, was born, and lived and died among men. This fact comes out quite clearly in the literature; but it becomes still more manifest in intercourse with the people.¹

It will be of interest and full of instruction to trace why and how the doctrine of incarnation found such a large place in Hinduism and wherein the

¹ J. N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*. Oxford University Press. Used by permission.

Hindu idea of incarnations differs from the Christian.

All these thinkers accept fully the Upanishad doctrine that Brahman, being "beyond thought and speech," can receive neither sacrifice nor prayer. . . . Thus, it is one of the highest principles of Hindu theology that the Supreme receives no sacrifice and hears no prayer. Unless this principle be firmly grasped, the development of Hindu theology will remain incomprehensible.

This doctrine concerning God as being directly unapproachable brought into Hindu thought the absolute necessity of incarnations. The question which pressed upon their religious leaders was this: If the Supreme Spirit receives no offering, and answers no prayer, what is the use of religion? But since perhaps more among Indians than among any other people the truth is lived out that the instinct for the living God is undoubtedly the deepest and most consistent of all our religious instincts and faculties, so in India some way had to be found to reach the Great Spirit. In connection with this another truth impresses one, which is, the insistent desire and longing of the human heart for God in human form manifest in the flesh. It took the leaders of Indian thought long to reach that high ideal.

Among their earliest conceptions was that God became incarnate in animals, hence the worship of the monkey, the hooded snake, the ever sacred cow. But as time went on God in human form was craved and in that development we see their idols, part man and part animal. So we have all over

India the human body blended with the animal in the man-fish, the man-tortoise, the man-boar, the man-lion, the man-horse, and the man-elephant. Then as the conceptions of God became more noble the mixed image did not satisfy, so we find added wings, several heads, in the case of the snake a thousand heads—the emblem of eternity. Some idols have many arms and eyes. Next came the idea of sex, thought of as life-giving energy, and the gods began to have their wives. But all this approach to God in human form does not satisfy permanently, so we have Krishna, god in human form, growing up among the people, and he is the most popular of all the incarnations of India.

To at all understand the tremendous hold of idolatry in India one must remember that to many of the people every idol is in a very real sense an incarnation. Many, but not all, Hindus think of each idol as a living personal god. The image has been made by human hands, they admit, but after its dedication by the priests the god lives in it, using the stone, wood, or metal body as the human soul uses the human body. The god lives in the temple among his people, receives at their hands the food upon which he subsists, welcomes them to his presence, and makes them his guests. He listens to their prayers and they believe he answers them. The whole of the temple worship depends upon this belief, that the Supreme Spirit has poured his presence into every image of himself, and with thirty million such idol incarnations there is no difficulty about opportunity to worship.

Why give another religion to a people whose

most distinguishing characteristic is their religious consciousness? This is a legitimate question. We answer: Because this great misdirected religious consciousness forms a basis of our hope for the highest type of spirituality in India's Christian future. Missionary work in India is well defined by the teaching presented by Paul on Mars' Hill to another misdirected, intensely religious people, "Whom therefore you ignorantly worship him declare I unto you."

Amid all the discouragement in India, such as the smallness of the Christian community as compared to the hundreds of millions of Hindus, does not one's heart stir with hope as he listens to one of India's sons tell how even the greatest of idolatrous temples falls and perishes:

In the dark background of antiquity one of the most lustrous gems is the temple of Diana in Ephesus. The ambition and enterprise of antiquity exhausted itself in the temple of Diana in Ephesus. Wondrous building. It took two hundred and twenty years to complete. It was built of finest marble and gold and timbered with cedar and cypress. . . . It was so dazzling and beautiful that the doorkeeper constantly cried to them who entered, "Take heed to your eyes, take heed to your eyes." Here is the utmost of man's resources! That gorgeous structure long ago kissed the dust in which it molds. . . . Fitting picture of human glory; its cradle, dust; its mausoleum, ashes! The same will happen in India.

Contrasting a philosophical, mythical, humanly thought-out religion of India with the revelation in the Christian Bible, missionaries come to value much

more highly their revelation, and become on the Indian mission field much more enthusiastic about giving Christ's gospel to a most lovable, warm-hearted, religiously inclined people. To better feel the force of this look on some of the contrasts between Hinduism and Christianity.

First, the Supreme Spirit in Hinduism received neither worship nor prayers, is above morality and is not under any moral obligation. If Hindus were to admit under their theory of karma that their gods were not above morality, then they would have to come under the law of karma in which every act works itself out in retribution in another birth. If they admitted that their gods were not above moral acts, that would put them on the "wheel" where new acts form new karma, which must be expiated in another existence, so that as soon as the clock runs down it winds itself up again. Such an admission would bring their gods even into the caste system, the core of which is that "each person is born in that caste for which his former actions have prepared him." To avoid all this they conceive of their gods as "above morality and that they may do deeds which man must neither copy nor condemn." When we realize that to the Hindu mind God is not necessarily moral we begin to understand why in a religious system in which spirit only is real and matter an illusion the system should express itself in such debasing practices as are prevalent in many things found in India.

This great philosophical, mythical, man-made religion has led religious India into the doctrinal confusion indicated in the following:

Here, then, we have the Hindu world-theory in all its permanent essentials: God real, the world worthless; the God unknowable, the other gods not to be despised; the Brahmans with their Vedas the sole religious authority; the caste a divine institution, serving as the chief instrument of reward and punishment; man doomed to repeated birth and death, because all action leads to rebirth; the world-flight the only noble course for awakened man and the one hope of escape from the entanglements of sense and transmigration.

All this doctrinal confusion in the practical life of religious India has produced idolatry, with its thirty million idols; castes numbering thousands, in every instance forbidding social intercourse or intermarriage; child marriage and enforced widowhood, leaving many million suffering as child widows; and over fifty million human beings created in the image of God in the name of religion are branded as untouchable.

Now we are prepared to have some appreciation of what the gospel of the incarnation brings to such a religiously minded people thus mistaught. First, it reveals God as a living, active, loving Father. This at once solves the age-old problem of Hinduism connected with God being above morality and beyond thought and speech. These ideas about God in Hinduism gave birth to the Hindu idea that God's only action is sport, and that he in sport created a world of illusion. Who can estimate all the sorrow that through centuries has followed in the train of that conception of the Supreme Spirit?

Imagine the missionary among common people with such ideas about God telling the full story of

the sinless incarnation, the "Gift of God's love," and then telling them that Jesus taught, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven"; telling of "The high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy," then interpreting the nature of God in Christ's own words, in language they can comprehend: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" I know not how better to let those who have never been in India in the midst of such conditions understand the joy of such a message than to give an incident right out of missionary life. It was told me by one of our Indian ministers working in the villages. He had a community that he was preparing for baptism. Among the things we teach them while being prepared for baptism is the Lord's Prayer. This Indian preacher gathered his people together out under the stars in the balmy evening air of India, after the day's work and the simple evening meal were over.

He told me that in the company there was a simple old woman who lived in one of the hundreds of thousands of Indian villages. She had never had any idea of God except what she had gained from the idolatrous teachings and practices all about her. She never had committed anything to memory, and the one thought of her life was to work enough hours to keep from starvation. The Indian preacher was teaching this group the Lord's Prayer. This old woman had listened to the explanation and after much effort had committed to memory the first

clause, "*Ai hamare Bap jo asman per hai*" (Our Father which art in heaven). The Indian preacher noticed that she had learned well the Hindustani of "Our Father which art in heaven," but also that as he went on to teach the rest of the Lord's Prayer she took no interest. She would sit smiling in her poverty, her face beaming and looking heavenward. After a number of such experiences the preacher called the old woman forward and reprovably said to her, "You have learned so well '*Ai hamare Bap jo asman per hai*,' why don't you go and learn the rest of the Lord's Prayer?"

The poor old woman, with a look of grieved surprise, and with her hands turned up expressing helplessness, a characteristic Indian gesture, replied, "*Kya zarurat hai?*" Which being interpreted means, "What is the necessity?" "What more does a poor old woman need?" That is, just that one phrase from the gospel of the Son of God, "Our Father which art in heaven," falling into the heart of that poor old village woman, completely changed her whole outlook on life, death, and eternity. It had satisfied all her soul's longings. So out of an overflowing heart her thought was: "What more do I need? A Father in heaven for a poor old village woman, a home in heaven where there will be no want, nor tears, nor pain, forever! What is the necessity of my learning more?" Time and eternity were all provided for in those seven Christ-given words, "*Ai hamare Bap jo asman per hai.*"

If you want to understand the secret of the missionary's joy in India's mass movement, let the idea of the comfort portrayed in this story apply to the

hundreds of thousands of India's mass-movement converts.

To further understand the joyous message of the Sinless Incarnation to India's millions recall the social evils of caste, and the customs named earlier that are the fruits of Hinduism. Then imagine the missionary telling the people that are suffering such things that the Sinless Incarnation was sent into the world not so much to give a system of doctrine as, in his own personal character, life, death, and resurrection as the Son, "Who is in the bosom of the Father," to reveal the heart of God the Father to the world. Then to explain that in all his teachings, actions, and miracles Christ's greatest purpose was to make all so clear that man could see and better understand the great loving heart of our Father in heaven. To make all this more clear to India's heart imagine your missionaries picturing Jesus taking little outcaste children into his arms, touching the untouchable leper and making him whole, dining with the outcaste publicans and sinners, feeding the hungry, opening blind eyes, healing the sick, giving reason to the lunatic, weeping at the grave of his friend Lazarus, and raising him from the dead and thus giving an assurance of the resurrection, weeping over Jerusalem, shedding great drops of blood, forgiving those who nailed him to the cross, forgiving the thief beside him on the cross and promising him, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Hear him telling the story of the resurrection, the forty days with their marvelous lessons, the ascension, reigning in glory, and the coming again to receive his people unto himself,

that where he is they may be with him forever. What more need I say? Could there be a greater contrast? Could a loving Father-God do more to win the burning heart of India? Oh, the joy of telling India that God is Christ-like!

To still further see the need of giving Christ to India one has but to think on the great changes now going on in India. One, the sense and value of history, has laid hold of the cultured of mythical India, and this has led them to study Hinduism frankly and openly. Many now frankly admit that the incarnations of Hinduism are mythical, unreal, and that the incarnation of Jesus Christ is historical, real, and this has proved very potent in awakening the Hindu mind. Many others simply avoid the subject.

Here are some of the questions now before thoughtful India: If the incarnations of Hinduism are all mythical and unreal, what are we to do? Is not to give it all up to confess that the Hindu mind not only mistook myth for history but that it has also been wholly mistaken in one of its chief and deepest religious intuitions? Then follows another question: If we cannot trust our religious instincts in a matter so vital as this, what can we trust? They are finding as their only way out, to admit that, while they were mistaken in taking myths for history, they were yet entirely correct in believing in incarnation, and in looking for God manifest in the flesh. Multitudes of educated Indians are now coming to see that the Sinless Incarnation of the gospel meets all the needs of their deepest spiritual instincts and longings and solves their

theological problems. They are coming to believe that Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfill, and that he indeed crowns Hinduism.

Think on this: The West through many agencies is destroying the old faith of these religious people. Is it not therefore her duty and responsibility to use all possible effort to give them the Christian doctrine of the incarnation, to take the place of what they are losing? It was to make a small contribution toward meeting that need and discharging that obligation that *THE SINLESS INCARNATION* was written.

SUGGESTION FOR READING FURTHER

What has been written in this chapter is not included in *THE SINLESS INCARNATION* as it has gone forth by the hundred thousand and is still going in India in a number of vernaculars. This chapter has been written as an introduction entirely for home readers to help give them an insight into the prominent belief in incarnations in Indian religious thinking and to set forth one of the ways the missionaries are trying to meet India's spiritual needs. Another purpose in writing this introductory chapter is to help prepare the home reader to understand the mental attitude of those for whom *THE SINLESS INCARNATION* was really written.

Therefore in reading the rest of this book try to imagine either that you had never before read or heard anything about Jesus Christ, or that what you had read or heard was criticizing him and making him out to be an impostor, or that you are a new convert just out of another religion, knowing

but little about Jesus and needing to have your faith strengthened and your heart warmed. The story as told in the coming chapters is so simple and follows so closely the New Testament historical outline that if you can read it in the state of mind I have suggested, so that it may have the freshness of news, as it has for the people of India, I trust it will help to a better understanding of our work. As you read further, with the few suggestive comments added here and there for our Indian readers, keep this in mind: Suppose I had either never known anything about Jesus, or what little I had known had prejudiced me against him, or if I were a new convert, would the reading of this little book help me to love him, and trust in him, as a true Incarnation and as my personal Saviour?

CHAPTER II

HE "EMPTIED HIMSELF"

I HAVE called Christ's advent into the world "The Sinless Incarnation," not only because of his sinlessness, but also because before his birth the angel of the Lord had said, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."¹ Further, as the story of the life of Jesus will show, he was tempted as we are tempted, yet never either sins, repents, or makes confession of having sinned. In this he lives above the greatest of men and shows himself to be in truth the Sinless Incarnation.

I am not going to argue nor offer proof, but will just invite the reader, as a guest, to partake of a feast of love already spread. I shall say nothing about or against the sacred books of other religions, but shall tell the story of the Lord Jesus, the Sinless One, as found in our sacred books, with the hope that it may help those who know the sacred books of other religions to make comparisons and to choose the best, and also to help Christian converts to have more love for the Lord Jesus.

I recently left Vancouver, British Columbia, in a great ship for India. That ship plowed through the mighty ocean at the rate of sixteen miles an hour day and night; yet on it, and on other ships before reaching India, we were over twenty days and nights

¹ Matt. 1. 21.

so completely surrounded by water that we could not see the land. As we passed over God's greatest ocean, thousands of miles wide, and miles deep, whose mighty waves have been washing the shores of three continents for unnumbered centuries, I felt utterly incompetent to comprehend the ocean's greatness; nevertheless after crossing it, I had a clearer idea of the ocean than if I had not crossed. In like manner a study of the Sinless Incarnation will take us over infinite oceans of divine grace; and while I well know that no finite mind can fully comprehend all, yet let us hope that even a journey over them will give us a more comprehensive conception of the boundless oceans of divine grace.

To clear the way, at the very beginning, I wish to say that the teaching of some, that Christ died to cause God the Father to love sinners, is wholly contradictory to the teachings of the sacred book of the Christians. That book teaches that "God so loved the world" that "he gave," "sent," and "spared not" his "only begotten and dearly beloved Son," and that the Son said: "I delight to do thy will, O God." So, "grace" represents divine love in united action to save mankind.

To Paul, who was a merciless persecutor of the early Christians, the Lord Jesus, after his ascension, made a special revelation of himself. Paul after that became not only a devout follower of the Lord Jesus but the most able interpreter of the teachings of the Lord Jesus who has ever lived. In the following statement Paul outlines the story of the incarnation of Jesus:

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.”²

Grace is the source of all that follows. What is grace? Grace is more than an attribute of God, for God is Love. Grace, therefore, is the love of God the Father, of the God-man Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit, united in a sacrificial offering to save “that which was lost.”

Paul’s outline of God’s grace in the text quoted states three great facts:

Christ was rich.

Christ became poor.

“That ye through his poverty might become rich.”

These three facts and in that order will be our chart over the oceans of grace.

“Though he was rich.” I rejoice that no inspired writer has ever made any attempt to define how rich Jesus was. We have been given marvelous visions of God in the book of Isaiah and, also, in the book of Revelation; but no real attempt has been made to define the riches of Christ before his incarnation. Let us leave that in a plain statement where the Bible leaves it: “In the beginning” the Lord Jesus was “*with God*” and “*was God*.” What more need be said on “He was rich”?

“*For your sakes he became poor.*” Christ’s poverty can only be measured by estimating the riches he renounced. While the Bible makes no attempt to tell how rich Christ was, I shall put in the form of

² Cor. 8. 9.

seven steps downward, well called, Saint Paul's description of Christ's voluntary humiliation. Here are the steps in Christ's descent into poverty.

SEVEN STEPS IN CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

Christ's Voluntary Humiliation

1. Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped.
2. But emptied himself.
3. Taking the form of a servant.
4. Made in the likeness of man.
5. Becoming obedient.
6. Unto death.
7. Yea, the death of the cross.

These seven steps will help us to see how Christ, in his incarnation, "for your sakes" descended from glory to Calvary, from equality with God to "even the death of the cross."

But before Paul named these steps he prefaced them by this exhortation for each reader: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." I pass on Paul's exhortation.

The First Step in Christ's Humiliation

"Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped." That is, in the first downward step the Lord Jesus took he voluntarily let go all the glory he had with God before the worlds were made. What a lesson there is in this for some weak Christians in India who hang on to caste and even try to bring it into the Christian Church! Since the

Lord Jesus Christ for others could, in his first downward step, cheerfully give up “being on an equality with God,” is it too much to ask from Indian Christians that they once for all and forever abandon caste? Is it too much, in comparison with Christ’s divine humbling of himself, to ask a non-Christian who is planning to follow the Lord Jesus to abandon caste forever, in order to become his follower? May I here repeat Paul’s exhortation, “Have this mind [that is, the same kind of a humble spirit] in you which was also in Christ Jesus”?

The Second Step in Christ’s Humiliation

“*He emptied himself.*” This was his second downward step in “for your sakes he became poor.” Theologians through the centuries have not been able to perfectly agree on how much is included in “He emptied himself,” but for our practical purposes let us take the interpretation found in one of Charles Wesley’s immortal hymns:

“He left his Father’s throne above,
So free, so infinite his grace!
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam’s helpless race;
’Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!”

The Third Step in Christ’s Humiliation

“*Taking the form of a servant.*” This describes the third downward step in “For your sakes he became poor.” He who had created all worlds, all life, became the servant of all. He freely gave up reigning and ruling and voluntarily began serving. All that is to follow in the other steps in Christ’s

voluntary humiliation is included in "taking the form of a servant." I shall therefore not dwell long upon this step, but pass on to consider the other downward steps included in his becoming poor and "taking the form of a servant."

CHAPTER III

THE ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT

HE was "made in the likeness of men."

The Fourth Step in Christ's Humiliation

We have now reached in Christ's humbling himself the fourth step which includes his sinless incarnation. As I am only attempting to set in order the account as found in the sacred book of the Christians, I shall begin with *Prophecy*, or the foretelling of Christ's incarnation which makes him a real historical personality.

Christ's incarnation is without parallel among the marvelous events of history, and is "Immanuel, God with us." Therefore even Jehovah could not let it come and go without prophetic announcement. Though Jesus was born in obscure Bethlehem twenty centuries ago, the greatness of the event is seen in the fact that after twenty centuries no man in the civilized world, no matter of what religion, can correctly date a letter to his friend without recognizing Christ's incarnation; that is, it changed the course of history. In the Old Testament are found over sixty prophecies concerning the Christ's incarnation, his life on earth and his death. Out of this great number I shall quote only four prophecies which were all made between seven and nineteen hundred years before Christ's incarnation.

In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.¹

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.²

Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, which art little to be among the thousands of Juda, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.³

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.⁴

Let these four prophecies out of many suffice.

Let us now pass on to the New Testament historical account of the birth of Jesus. The Gospels are given us by four of his disciples, each using his own individuality and recording what impressed him most. Three of these were Jews and wrote chiefly for the Jews. But one, Luke, was in all probability a Gentile. I call special attention to Luke because he makes it perfectly clear that he gives his historical and biographical account for the Gentiles, by putting it early in his history that Jesus came as "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

Luke's Gospel has been well called "The most beautiful book ever written." He also wrote the "Book of Acts," which gives us the history according to prophecy of the first great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, called Pentecost, and also the growth and establishment of the early Christian Church. In Luke's preface to his Gospel he tells of the exactness and care with which he traced what

¹ Gen. 22. 18; ² Isa. 7. 14; ³ Mic. 5. 2. ⁴ Isa. 9. 6.

he records to their original source—"eyewitnesses." Did ever a historian select his material with greater care than Luke tells us he did?

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.

Luke connects his second historical book, "The Acts," with his first, "Luke's Gospel," by saying, "The former treatise I made, . . . concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up" into heaven. Then connecting the two books perfectly he goes on with the history following Christ's ascension.

One of the greatest modern Bible scholars, the Rev. W. F. Warren, founder and president-emeritus of Boston University, has written what is worthy by way of introduction to insert here. It shows the reverence and faith with which great Christian scholars in Christian lands now regard the New Testament record of the incarnation. He calls it "The Divine Overshadowing."

It is of ineffable sacredness and mystery. It was preannounced in words which my lips are not worthy to repeat—words which only the white angel of the Annunciation was worthy to bring to human ears: "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, thou blessed among women!" It is not for me—it is

not for any mortal man—to interpret those words. Here earth's highest mysteries meet and blend. But, blessed be God! the words got uttered, and never can the universe be what it would have been had they never been spoken. And, blessed be God! it is for me, and for every member of my race, to hail the issue in a sinless, unbegotten Man, an unexampled incarnate Son of God. A new creation was begun, one far surpassing that archetypal one effected, when in the beginning, the same power of the Highest overshadowed the primal waters and commanded that light and life should be. Here, first, is the world of creatures permitted to see the divine becoming human, and the human divine.⁵

The Angelic Announcement

God's purpose of love in sending his angel to Mary, who was to be the mother of Jesus, was that she might understand perfectly the great mystery, and it is recorded that the countless millions of common people, and also the cultured, of all lands and all coming ages might so understand the story of the Sinless Incarnation as to be able to intelligently receive the Lord Jesus as their divine Saviour. The angel has made the telling of this matchless mystery of history one of the choicest gems of all literature, chaste, clear, and beautiful; but this required the angel of the Lord. Having the mystery in mind, which the angel came to reveal with an open mind to receive the truth, read reverently the angelic announcement of the Sinless Incarnation:

The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of

⁵ *Zion's Herald*, February 11, 1925. Reprinted by permission.

David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.⁶

From what other person could Luke, the "beloved physician" and accurate historian, have secured such a marvelously beautiful and complete account of that angelic revelation, in which the highest mysteries of heaven and earth meet and are so blended that the divine becomes human and the human divine, save from the only human "eyewitness," Mary the mother of our Lord?

The Angelic Testimony to Joseph

An all-wise God, who was about to send his Son to be born into this world through superhuman intervention—a miraculous conception—saw clearly the necessity of giving a testimony concerning the absolute purity and holy innocence of the virgin,

⁶ Luke 1. 26-35.

“blessed among women,” and chosen of God to be the mother of the “God-man.” God saw that this testimony must be such as would absolutely satisfy Joseph, who was to be the virgin’s husband and yet not the father of the Lord Jesus, and that would stand sure for all people and all time. The Lord Jesus called Mary “mother,” yet he never called any one “Father,” but God. With these facts in mind, read reverently the testimony of the “angel of the Lord”:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:

When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, . . . was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name Jesus.⁷

Where but from Joseph, the only “eyewitness,”

⁷ Matt. 1. 18-25.

could the Gospel historian have received this account?

The Angelic Announcement of the Birth of Jesus

God, in the message to Mary and Joseph, furnished all the evidence concerning the sinless incarnation that one would think could ever be necessary to make it easy for all people to believe on his Son Jesus Christ. But lest some heart, somewhere, sometime, might want yet more assurance, God sent his angels on the night of the birth of the Lord Jesus to tell the shepherds, men of honest toil. God always honors men of honest toil; so, to those who represented the millions of earth's toilers the angels came. Listen to the angelic joyful announcement:

And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men, in whom he is well pleased.⁸

What the shepherds found needs no comment, fur-

⁸ Luke 2. 8-14.

ther than to say that the finding of the shepherds confirmed the announcement of the angels. Here is the testimony of the shepherds:

And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.⁹

The lack of space makes impossible the reproduction of all the wonderful story, but I will give the story of the three Wise Men who, guided by a star in the heavens, came from the East to worship the child Jesus; and many have thought that they came from India. Here it is:

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-Men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.¹⁰

Herod the king tried to get the Wise Men to tell him where the child was, saying, "that I may come and worship him." But he meant "that I may come and kill him."

⁹ Luke 2. 18-20.

¹⁰ Matt. 2. 1-2.

God warned the Wise Men in a dream, after they had worshiped the child Jesus the Lord, not to tell the king where he was; so they departed another way into their own country. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been mocked, "sent forth and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, from two years old and under," hoping that he might kill Jesus; but God had warned Joseph in a dream, and the Lord Jesus was gone. This story of the wickedness of a wicked king gives us, concerning the birth of the Lord Jesus, the additional testimony of the Wise Men and a great Roman king.

Do not all these angelic revelations historically recorded lift all that is mysterious up out of the realm of the human and into that of the divine? Since one of the very highest conceptions of Hinduism is found in the idea of incarnations, it should be easy for India to believe that God manifest in the flesh, the fulfillment of India's heart's desire, was of God and maiden born. It should not be hard for India to believe that God, who is the author of all life, could make a loving representation of himself through a human incarnation, when such holy love called for such a revelation as "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ for two thousand years, on the anniversary of the sinless incarnation, has sung hymns of joy and praise. Here is part of the hymn that, when a child, fired my heart and imagination, when I heard it sung on such anniversaries, and it fires them still:

"Mortals, awake, with angels join,
And chant the solemn lay;
Joy, love, and gratitude combine,
To hail the auspicious day.

"In heaven the rapturous song began,
And sweet seraphic fire
Through all the shining legions ran,
And strung and tuned the lyre.

"Swift through the vast expanse it flew,
And loud the echo rolled!
The theme, the song, the joy was new—
'Twas more than heaven could hold.

"Down through the portals of the sky
The impetuous torrent ran;
And angels flew, with eager joy,
To bear the news to man.

"Hail, Prince of Life, forever hail!
Redeemer, Brother, Friend!
Though earth, and time, and life shall fail,
The praise shall never end."

Meditate now upon the humiliation of the Lord Jesus. He who "was God" is born in a manger, in a stable among the cattle. India probably has more poor people than has any other land, and some of the poorest people on earth. Christ was born poorer than the poorest of the poor of India. I have often thought, since Christ was an Asiatic, that God had India's poor people in mind when Christ was born. As I go about among the millions of the poor in India, I can always tell them of a sympathizing Christ who became poorer than the poorest; and that "the Lord Jesus knows" all about their poverty.

Then, his parents had to flee from their own land and their own people into a strange land and among a strange people, in order to save the life of the child, the Lord Jesus. Have you ever heard of parents, even in India, who had to do that? There is persecution for Christians in India; but even in that you can have comfort through looking to Jesus who, as a child, because of persecution, had to be carried into a strange land. "Jesus knows" all about your persecution; for, having "taken on himself the form of a man," he went to the bottom, and fulfilled the prophecy, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

CHAPTER IV

FROM MANGER TO BETRAYAL

“He humbled himself, becoming obedient.”

The Fifth Step in Christ's Humiliation

THIS is Christ's fifth downward step. Christ was not only a servant, but an “obedient” servant and man—obedient to the will of God and obedient to his parents. Think next upon his “obedience” to his parents in boyhood, young manhood, and to God in his public ministry.

Jesus Under Twelve. We have but one short statement about Jesus from the time of his infancy up to the age of twelve, yet it is a wholly satisfying account:

The child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.¹

What more could we ask than to have him “grow” as do others, become “strong,” be “filled with wisdom” and have “the grace of God”?

Then follows a most instructive story of his remaining behind his parents for three days in the Temple (note his religious intuitions, not worldly things, but in the Temple) at Jerusalem and in the midst of the teachers, “both hearing them and asking them questions; and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

¹Luke 2. 40.

This full story is found in the second chapter of Saint Luke's Gospel.

The Lord Jesus From Twelve to Thirty. Much of what we know of the life of Christ from the age of twelve to thirty is here given:

He went down with them [his parents], and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.²

Let us try to get acquainted with those in the home where the Lord Jesus lived and worked up to the age of thirty years. Both Joseph and Mary, his mother, were of royal blood, being of the house and lineage of David, and they both belonged, though poor, to the very highest and best of the Jewish race. The culture and piety of the Holy Family must be kept in mind, in order to have any proper estimate of the early life and spiritual culture of the Lord Jesus. Joseph was "a righteous man," counted worthy of the confidence of heaven, for he was four times honored by having the "angel of the Lord" appear unto him; the first time to enlighten him concerning Mary, to whom he was betrothed, saying, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." Next, to save the life of the Lord Jesus, the angel told him to "take the young child and his mother, and flee unto Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee." Then, when the danger was past, the "angel of the Lord" said unto Joseph, "Arise and take the young child and his

² Luke 2. 51, 52.

mother and go into the land of Israel." And the fourth time he was warned of God to go to a city called Nazareth, that the prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene." Joseph did all these things, and such was the noble character of him who was at the head of the home where Jesus was reared.

The poverty of this royal family saved Jesus from having a governess or tutor, and gave him Mary his mother for a teacher, a constant companion, counselor and friend, for thirty years. Oh, such a mother, chosen by God the Father to be the mother of "Immanuel," Mary, to whom the angel said, "The Lord is with thee, . . . blessed art thou among women!" Having parents of royal descent of the highest known purity and piety, and with a consciousness that they were rearing the Child of divine conception, of age-long expectation by their great nation, through whom there was to be "glad tidings of great joy to all people," is it any wonder that the divine Jesus grew up without sin, and "spake as never man spake"? Ordinarily, the great men of one generation are surpassed by those of the next, but the world in all its moral teaching has never produced a moral code to be compared with the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord Jesus is still the wisest of the wise and the holiest of the holy—the Sinless Incarnation.

During these years "he was a carpenter"—he worked with his hands, and helped in supporting his mother, who, it is believed, early became a widow. Think of Jesus, who was to be the Saviour of the world, ennobling labor by giving eighteen years of

his life to honest toil! Is he not in this a model for the young men of India?

The Public Ministry of the Lord Jesus. In making his baptism the first act in entering upon his public ministry, Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the law for his consecration from on high to the office of Messiah. His last commandment to his disciples was: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Has not the Lord Jesus, in being baptized, left an example of obedience to be followed by all, in all nations, who desire to become his true disciples? Here is the record:

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.³

The two great facts always to be remembered are, that at his baptism the Holy Spirit, by whom he was conceived, came again upon him; and the voice of God came out of heaven, saying, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That is, God the Father and the Holy Spirit bore testimony to their

³ Matt. 3. 13-17.

pleasure in and approval of this way of Jesus entering upon his public ministry. This was followed by

The Temptation of the Lord Jesus. Times of testing have always had a place in the life of religious leaders, and Jesus was no exception. Here is the record:

Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted [tested] of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterwards hungered.⁴

Satan's chief and selfish purposes in Christ's testing, as the second scene in His temptation will show, was to have himself worshiped and induce Jesus to found a kingdom of this world:

And he [Satan] led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whosoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine.⁵

Jesus did not yield, but, as soon as the temptation was over, he began to preach, "My kingdom is not of this world." If Christ had chosen to have a temporal kingdom, to include all other kingdoms and to be the greatest that earth had ever known, and if he had joined the Jews to throw off the Roman yoke, and had shown earthly ambitions, he would never have been crucified. But that is just what he did not do. He chose to found a kingdom that would be neither temporal, national, nor polit-

⁴ Matt. 4. 1, 2.

⁵ Luke 4. 5-7.

ical, but spiritual. His kingdom was to be "of God," "of heaven" (used interchangeably); that is, it was to be ruled from heaven and exist among all the earthly kingdoms to make earth more like heaven. The simplest possible summary of "the kingdom of God" is found in the petition in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Christ's deliberate choice to obey, while on earth, only the will of God, and to wholly renounce Satan, the world and worldly ambition, reveals clearly and forever the purpose of his kingdom and completely explains the non-spiritual, wicked, earthly hate that culminated in his crucifixion.

His Public Ministry. The following verse contains an outline of the three years of the public ministry of Jesus:

And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.⁶

For a full account of all his wonderful works of mercy and love, I must refer you to the four Gospels. I have now given an outline of Christ's public ministry and the purpose of his kingdom on earth. Before telling of Christ's sacrificial death, glorious resurrection, reigning in glory, and his coming again, I shall present a summary of Christ's teachings, by means of which *his kingdom is to advance*.

(A) *The Fatherhood of God Is the Chief Cornerstone of the Kingdom.* Jesus said to his people, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father

⁶ Matt. 9. 35.

who art in heaven." This tender, loving teaching is that God, the All-Wise, All-Powerful, gives to each of us a Father's loving thought and personal care, and has an eternal plan for each child; and yet, with all that, he also maintains his Fatherly, Kingly majesty. The teaching of the kingdom concerning the Fatherhood of God is well summed up in the matchless exhibition of a father's love, as seen in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15. 11-32).

(B) *Conditions of Membership in Christ's Kingdom.* Nicodemus, a very religious man, early in the public ministry of Jesus, came by night and said, "Thou art a teacher come from God." And the Lord Jesus, accepting that office, at once concerning membership in his kingdom, said:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew.⁷

Nicodemus, astonished at such high doctrine, asked this vital question: "How can a man be born anew, or be born from above?" Jesus answered—oh glorious and all-sufficient answer:

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.⁸ (See Num. 21. 4-9.)

And for a further and fuller answer, Jesus said:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him

⁷ John 3. 5-7.

⁸ John 3. 14, 15.

should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.⁹

(C) *The Lord Jesus Himself and the Kingdom.*
I will present here only what the Lord Jesus said concerning himself, which sets forth what his disciples have, his own word for believing concerning him:

I am the light of the world (John 8. 12).

I am the bread of life (John 6. 48).

I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14. 6).

The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19. 10).

The Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (Matt. 9. 6).

I am the resurrection and the life (John 11. 25).

All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28. 18).

I am *the* Son of God (John 10. 30).

I and the Father are one (John 10. 30).

Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26. 64).

(D) *Until His Coming Again, How Is the Kingdom to Be Carried Forward?* (1) His followers have the Bible for their guide. Here is an outline of the best way for one of another religion to read the Bible.

(a) Read the four Gospels for the story of the life of the Lord Jesus.

(b) Read chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Gospel of Matthew for the moral code of Christ's kingdom.

⁹ John 3. 16, 17.

(c) Read Saint John's Gospel, chapters 14, 15, and 16 for Christ's final address and his deepest spiritual teachings.

(d) Then read the New and the Old Testaments, and in that order.

(2) We are to pray in his name. Here is his promise just before his ascension:

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.¹⁰

(3) The promise of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was about to leave his disciples, and return to go to the Father, sorrow filled their hearts. Then Jesus, concerning the work of the Holy Spirit during his absence, gave some most wonderful promises. Jesus said:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.¹¹

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, *these* shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you.¹²

But the Comforter, *even* the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.¹³

(4) Then there is his farewell commandment:

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them,

¹⁰ John 14. 13. ¹¹ John 16. 7. ¹² John 16. 13, 14. ¹³ John 14. 26.

saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

Having thus briefly outlined the fundamental principles of Christ's kingdom, and having directed the reader to where he can find the full record of the three years of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus, and having explained his provision for its spread throughout the earth, in our next chapter we shall present the Gospel story of his atoning, sacrificial suffering.

¹⁴ Matt. 28. 18, 19.

CHAPTER V

GETHSEMANE TO CALVARY—OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH

THE SIXTH STEP IN CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

THIS is the sixth downward step. Here we come to the deepest mysteries of grace. Christ the Source of all life obedient unto voluntary death: "I lay down my life." As much as to say, "If the love shown in my life is not sufficient, I will show my love through my death." There is no device in Christ's kingdom to win by the sword or force. His plan is victory through suffering.

Why did Christ die for man? Because man, though sinful, bore his image. Christ's death gives us three great revelations from heaven.

Man is great.

Man is a great sinner.

Man is capable of being recreated and of becoming an eternal coheir with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Indeed, Christ's estimate of man's value is so exalted that to no small extent it explains the mystery of his being both the Son of God and the Son of man.

This leads us, under the sixth downward step, to the presentation of the manner of Christ's death.

"Even the Death of the Cross." No one knows when he may die, but we all hope, when the time comes for dying, to be among our friends and loved ones, enjoying comforts and kindness. But the

friends of Jesus "all forsook him and fled," and he was delivered over to cruel enemies and died at their hands, "even the death of the cross." It was in that day the emblem of the world's bitterest hate. Thank God, this brutal form of taking human life has almost been banished from the face of the earth for fifteen or more centuries!

What Precedes the Cross. In order that we may better understand the meaning of the cross, let us go with the Lord Jesus through some of the scenes preparatory to his crucifixion.

Pause at Gethsemane. Jesus entered Gethsemane, saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Here began the real propitiation for our sins. Was not the intensity of suffering caused by the fact that in his infinite purity he began to feel the utter vileness and pollution of sin?

Here and through all that follows, the greatest suffering is not in the body, but in the soul. In the garden there was no physical torture, but his soul agony, under the burden of our sins, caused the sweating of great drops of blood. Do not suppose the soul's existence is to be proved by words, for there are pains and joys which only the soul can feel. In this agony the Lord Jesus kneeled down—see the Lord Jesus on his knees—and prayed, saying:

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. . . . And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.¹

¹ Luke 22. 42-44.

Try to picture that scene. He was carrying on his soul the burden of the sins of the world, and saw before him the cross; his sinless, royal hands that had healed the multitude, he knew were soon to be pierced by the cruel nails. Then, he was to be made of "no reputation." How we care for our reputation. How it would hurt you, should any stain come upon your good name. He saw that he was to be counted as a criminal and "accursed."

Only once did I hear that great London preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, and his text was: "Between two thieves." And that greatest of preachers painted such a picture of Christ's glory with the Father before the world was, and then in contrast the humiliation, the shame and his loss of reputation, his dying as a criminal "between two thieves," as had never before come into my thought. Then and there in an entirely new sense I realized something of what it meant for the Son of God to hang on the accursed cross "between two thieves." Do you wonder that in contemplation of such shame and soul agony "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground"?

Meditate also upon the Father's love as tested in that hour of his Son's infinite agony, if you desire to have some conception of God the Father's love for sinful man. I see God the Father, who had given his only begotten Son to save his enemies, looking down with a pierced heart upon that Gethsemane garden scene; he sees his beloved Son, Jesus, in unutterable soul agony, and Judas, to whom his Son had given three years of his life, betraying Jesus with a kiss; he sees the mob with

the staves assembling; he sees his Son in agony praying more earnestly until "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground."

Have you ever tried to imagine what it must have cost God, the holy, loving Father, to restrain himself from exerting his divine power, while his only begotten and dearly beloved pleads with him, saying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"? Or, in other words, "Father, if there is any other way to save the people, spare me, spare me."

But the love of God the Father for lost sinners stood the strain.

There is one passage in prophetic vision that masters me, that overwhelms me. It is a prophetic portrayal of the Father's love. The prophecy is concerning Jesus, God's only Son, the Child of infinite love:

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.²

This always in my thinking refers to Christ's appeal in the garden: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass." The prophet adds a humanly incomprehensible statement concerning this awful hour, which was literally fulfilled when the Lord Jesus, God's Son, was in the sinner's place, making it possible for sin to be canceled and God's forgiving love to reach the sinner. Here is the prophecy:

² Isa. 53. 5.

Although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth, Yet it pleased Jehovah [his Father] to bruise him.

That he might spare the guilty sinner.

The infinite love and grace that enabled the Almighty Father to restrain his power during that awful scene, and not destroy those who were killing his Son, is infinitely above human comprehension; but it leaves no doubt concerning the great revealed truth, that "God [the Father] so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" to be "wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities."

Is it not blasphemous misrepresentation of the love of God to say that he loves sinners only because Christ died for them?

While Jesus was thus praying in agony and at intervals coming and teaching his disciples,

Behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them; and he drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? And when they which were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And a certain one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye *them* thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders, that were come against him, Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

..And they seized him, and led him *away*, and brought him into the high priest's house.

And the men that held *Jesus* mocked him, and beat him. And they blindfolded him, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is he that struck thee? And many other things spake they against him, reviling him.

And as soon as it was day, the assembly of the elders of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes; and they led him away into their council saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I ask *you*, ye will not answer. But from henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard his own mouth.³

Jesus, rather than deny that he was the Christ, the Son of God, gave the final evidence against himself that they needed in order to crucify him.

I will pass over many cruel indignities suffered by the sinless Jesus and come to "Then released he unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged."

Doctor Talmage, a once famous preacher of New York, told of traveling in Europe and finding in an obscure art gallery a picture of the scourging of Jesus. Jesus was in a standing and bending position. His hands were tied near the ground; with his body thus bent, his back bared, great, strong Roman soldiers, using heavy whips plaited with thongs tipped with iron wire, were laying lash upon lash, until the

³ Luke 22. 47-71.

royal flesh and blood of Jesus were falling and lying together upon the ground. We know that from this scourging he was so exhausted that he was unable to carry the cross. Doctor Talmage said, "After I saw that picture, I could not eat, I could not sleep, I could only lie awake and weep." This brutal scourging was but one of the "woundings for our transgressions" that the Lord Jesus endured on his way to "even the death of the cross."

Let us with sad hearts pass to another stage of Christ's being prepared for his crucifixion. Close your eyes, let Christ be the central figure, and with inner soul vision look upon the scene that follows the scourging. Let the inspired author bring it before us:

But Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Prætorium, and gathered unto him the whole band. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.⁴

Could the ingenuity of hell go further? A complete ceremony of mock coronation, a mock scarlet royal robe, a reed, mock symbol of sovereignty, knees bowed in mockery to a crown of thorns—how

⁴ Matt. 27. 26-31.

suggestive! The curse on the earth because of sin was that it should bring forth thorns. Now, when Christ is removing the curse, he is crowned with thorns. But, in the madness and delirium of the mock ceremony, they seize the reed and strike the crown, driving the thorns into his royal, holy brow. And then, as a climax to their bitter hate, and indignities, they "*spat upon him.*"

India understands the meaning of such a vile indignity. I remember hearing of a son who had rebelled against his earthly parents, as God says his children have rebelled against him. That son went into a life of dissipation, until his mother died of a broken heart. Yet the father, in love for his son, spent all he possessed, paying liquor, gambling, and other bills. One evening, after the mother had died and the home had been ruined, the father sat by the roadside watching and waiting for his wayward son's return. Just in the early twilight he saw him coming and went out to welcome him; but the son, mad with intoxication, saw his father, ran toward him, caught his father's long white beard between his two hands, and with a hand on each side of his father's face drawing that aged face close to his own, he spat and spat into his father's face. It is reported that when that aged, enfeebled father got himself loose from his son, he started off in the twilight over a hilltop, and, as he went, he was heard to cry aloud with a great groan of agony; and with that agonizing cry, all love for his son died out of that father's heart. That father never again called him son, nor had anything to do with him. That is, a father's love in that hour of testing failed; human

love died. But, thank God, the love of the Lord Jesus stood even the test of being "spat upon"!

That is, the all-enduring love of the Christ did not fail; for even after they "spat upon him," he permitted his persecutors to lead him away to crucify him.

And when they were come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink.⁵

It was the custom to give those who were about to suffer this lingering and most painful death a benumbing drink, but the Lord Jesus refused it and suffered "even the death of the cross" in full possession of all his faculties.

Crucifying Jesus. Have you ever tried to bring into the realm of your imagination the crucifixion scene: the multitude that followed, and with Satanic hate stood around and jeered to see the soldiers take off his seamless robe—the gift of love—and gamble over it? How they watched with fiendish glee the great rugged cross being thrown upon the ground, the soldiers taking Christ, disrobing him, and throwing him roughly down upon the cross and spreading his hands out on its arms.

Then they nailed to the cross the right hand first, the symbol of power. Look at that divinely royal, holy hand of the Lord Jesus. What had it done to merit this? By honest toil it had supported a widowed mother—what a suggestion for the treatment of widowed mothers in India! That hand had

⁵ Matt. 27. 33, 34.

been laid in blessing upon the heads of little children, making parents rejoice; it had fed the hungry, touched blind eyes and they saw, deaf ears and they heard, dumb tongues and they spake, the lame and they leaped for joy, and the dead and they lived.

Oh, see them! They are spreading that holy hand back downward upon the rugged cross. Look! That great, cruel soldier is putting his heavy knee upon the wrist, that the right hand of the Lord Jesus may not move. See that other soldier pointing a rough iron spike right over that tender quivering palm, and hear the thud, as another soldier with a huge mallet strikes blow upon blow, blow upon blow, until the cruel spike has gone through that royal, holy hand and entered into the wood far enough to hold the weight of the body of the Lord Jesus.

Then they nail the left hand, just as sinless and royal as the right hand, and it had helped in every good work.

Look again: they are stretching his body down on the cross and are nailing his holy feet, those feet that during weary days and nights carried the Lord Jesus through the length and breadth of the land, to feed the hungry, heal the sick, and bless the people.

They have finished nailing him to the cross. What next?

They are beginning to lift the cross to which is nailed the sinless body of the Lord Jesus. Look, they have it erect, they are moving forward to hold it directly over a hole in the rock, about four feet deep. It is correctly poised; they are letting go;

it drops with cruel jar; strikes the bottom and the Lord Jesus is being crucified—hanging upon the “accursed tree.”

The Sinlessness of Jesus. I shall here present the inspired record of the complete failure of a nation to prove that Jesus had sinned, and also the testimony of the governor and judge that Jesus was sinless:

When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified. So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us and on our children.⁶

Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, . . . saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood; . . . and he went away and hanged himself.⁷

⁶ Matt. 27. 17-25. ⁷ Matt. 27. 3-5.

At the crucifixion the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.⁸

⁸ Matt. 27. 54.

CHAPTER VI

ON THE CROSS

THE SEVENTH AND FINAL STEP IN CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

CEASE now looking at the cruel externals and turn to a contemplation of the soul-suffering and the inner and divine purpose of the cross. At once admit that it is love too wonderful for man, and learn the personal purpose of Jesus. "He loved me and gave himself for me." That is, Jesus loves everybody, as though each one were everybody and there were no one else to share his love. There is only one perfect expression of the word "love"—and that is Christ on the cross. This is infinitely beyond human comprehension, for "God only knows the love of God." What momentous questions are these!—

Is he man?

Is he God?

Is he both?

Does the cross look manward, or Godward, or toward both?

Is death night, the end, or the morning of eternal life?

Is there any comfort and hope in the death of the Lord Jesus for a sorrowing world?

In looking for an answer to such soul interrogations, first listen to his words on the cross:

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do (Luke 23. 34).

Woman, behold, thy son! And to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! (John 19. 26-27).

I thirst (John 19. 28).

To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise (Luke 23. 43).

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matt. 27. 46).

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23. 46).

It is finished (John 19. 30).

The Lessons of the Cross

What are some of the lessons of the words of Jesus Christ, spoken while on the cross?

First. As we listen to what the Lord Jesus said on the cross, we are assured that he is a man. His voice is a human voice. His confession of need is human. "I thirst" is human, and is the only reference to himself or his sufferings. The filial affection for his mother is human. He looks down from the cross at his mother as she is there, a true mother, bearing all the insults, saying to the railing mob, "He is my son." And when the Lord Jesus saw his mother—oh, such a loyal mother!—and John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," both standing beneath the cross, the Lord Jesus in that hour of unutterable agony forgot himself, and having no hand to use, he bowed his head and used his voice, saying, "Woman, behold, thy son!" And to the disciple, "Behold, thy mother!"

And thus from the cross the Lord Jesus planned for the physical comfort of his now aged mother. It is not only a man who is on the cross, it is the

Son of man, the divine-human Man, having the heart of a man, a woman, a child, the ideal Man—"bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh." Only such perfect humanity made possible his perfect priesthood. Christ's followers, through all time and in all lands, can sit at the foot of the cross and with infinite comfort say:

We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.¹

Forgiveness

Secondly. These sayings on the cross reveal the sublimity, yea, the divinity, of his forgiveness. While he was being nailed to the cross, and was hanging on the cross, and while the crowd were mocking and saying: "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross, . . . and we will believe," "He saved others; himself he cannot save," what was the Lord Jesus doing? Was he cursing them? This he might have done, as three days before he did the barren fig tree—and it withered and died. No! No! He was not doing that, but—mystery of mysteries—he was doing his Father's will, and showing his Father's infinite love for the sinful world. So, instead of cursing them, he was softly praying: "Father forgive them," "Father forgive them." Sometimes we think his teachings, "Bless them that curse you," "Forgive your enemies," "To him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer also the other," are exalted teachings, and so they are. But,

¹Heb. 4. 15.

as our example in forgiving love, did not the Lord Jesus on the cross do infinitely more than he asks of us?

A Missionary Experience

Once when I was walking away up in the Himalaya mountains and was approaching an old temple, the priest, recognizing me as a missionary, came out to meet me. He said: "I hear from pilgrims from all over India of the wonderful things you missionaries are doing and the wonderful story of Christ's crucifixion you tell. Will you tell me? I want to hear it directly from a missionary."

So we sat together under a tree on the side of a mountain, and I took my time and told him at length the story of Christ's sacrificial love and forgiving spirit. When I reached the place where they were nailing Jesus to the cross, and as I told the old priest that even while he was being nailed to the cross the Lord Jesus prayed for his enemies, "Father forgive them," the old priest sprang from my side, stood in front of me on a pathway just below me, excitedly moving backward and forward, shaking at me his clenched fists, while tears were rolling down his cheeks, and cried: "Get out of India! Get out of India!"

"Why?" I replied. "Why? What have I done? What have I done?"

He, trembling with excitement, answered: "Do not tell the warm-hearted people of India that matchless story of love and forgiveness; for we have nothing like it in Hinduism or Mohammedanism or Buddhism or Confucianism, or any other religion

of this Eastern world. If you tell my warm-hearted people that story, they will forsake us, our temples and sacrifices and services, and leave us priests all alone, and will follow Jesus."

That is just what is already beginning to happen, and the saying of the Master himself is being fulfilled: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

Thus he spake of his cross. Paul, the first great missionary, knowing the power of the cross, said, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." "Christ crucified" contains the missionary message of forgiving love, for all nations and all ages.

Comforting Revelations

Thirdly. His sayings on the cross make comforting revelations concerning the state of departed loved ones. Unite his promise to the thief on the cross, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise," with "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and all the future is flooded with the light of revealed truth. When one dying thief came to recognize the Lord Jesus as the Christ, he prayed, "Remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom," and received this divine assurance, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

For forty years in India I have been saddened as I have heard the un comforted weeping for the dead and dying children, because of the depressing uncertainty in the teaching of transmigration. I have wished that sorrowing parents everywhere might know that all children, of all religions, of all lands

and all ages, have been redeemed through the cross of Christ; that Jesus said concerning children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Oh, that India, China, and all nations might know that the Lord Jesus says to every dying child even as he did to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"!

Purgatory and transmigration for the children and all others who are in Christ cease to exist when paradise is revealed. Do you wonder, as you think of the child mortality of all lands and all religions through the centuries, and of how their spirits from among all religions are all with the Lord Jesus, that John was inspired to give for our comfort a view of heaven that has left a sorrowing world words of infinite consolation?

After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shalt the sun strike upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.²

All Nature Sympathized

With the Lord Jesus in his suffering in his last downward step of humiliation all nature sym-

² Rev. 7. 9, 10, 16, 17.

pathized, for, "From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour."

Darkness at Midday. Nature's sun refused to shine on its suffering Creator. "The earth did quake" in protest; "the rocks were rent" by an exhibition of such love; even their marble hearts were broken. The very graves opened. "The veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom."

Ever since our first parents were driven out of the Garden of Eden, and "the cherubim and flame of sword" kept the way of the tree of life, because of sin, there had been a veil between a holy God and sinful man. Now it is rent from "top to bottom," from heaven downward; "a new and living way" is opened for sinful man into the very presence of God. But, oh, the cost! Christ's first associates on earth were cattle in a stable, his last, thieves on the cross; but for all this and all he suffered between, not a word of complaint. Let us now turn away from all that pertains to the body and *look inward to the soul*. Suffering is in proportion to the greatness of the soul; so we now pass into the realm of suffering divine. Here the Lord Jesus, in addition to "tasting death for every man" and dying, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," had to bear the greater trial. God the Father hid his face, and Christ passed into such infinite depths of soul darkness that one asks, Is it too much to say that, in God's forsaking him, Jesus tasted hell for every man?

Hear the cry from God to God, a cry divine and therefore absolutely incomprehensible to mortal

man: "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*"

This cry "Why?" shows clearly that Jesus knew there was no sin or cause in himself, "the Sinless One," but that the cause must lie outside of himself. Without attempting to answer the "why" of such infinite loneliness and divine agony, commentators here helplessly drop their pens, and even poets only sing:

"'Tis mystery all—the Immortal dies,
'Tis mercy all—let earth adore,
And angel minds inquire no more."

The Message of the Cross

The philosophy of the cross is too profound by far for anyone in our present state of existence to fully explain with any human theory. Therefore I turn away from all human theories as incomplete, or as only partial explanations of such divine vicarious love. Let us listen to Christ himself tell of the price he paid that the human race might have salvation in his name. Christ's revelation to the world is that God is our Father and his coming into the world originated in "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

Follow on to Christ's revelation of his own free, complete, willing cooperation with the will of the Father, for there is more light thrown on the meaning of the cross in the interpretation of the Christ himself than in the words of all others:

The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?

Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations.

These quotations reveal Christ's whole-hearted co-operation in the will of his Father, the largeness of his conception, "all the nations," and the purpose that underlay it all.

"Repentance and remission of sins." I am not unaware that this may be read by those whose religion teaches that "Karma never errs and never spares," that, logically, "Repentance is useless, resentment irrational, escape impossible."

"The moving finger writes; and having writ
Moves on, nor all your pity and wit,
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

Which means, "What I have sowed, that—not more, but never less, and never otherwise—must I reap." Nevertheless, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations" is his own definition of the message of the cross. He reveals in this not only his own love but a "God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth; keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." In the matchless revelation of love on the cross we have

India's Unsolvable Problem Solved

Stand by, look up and behold God incarnate, who

had all power in heaven and earth, held to the cruel cross, not by iron spikes, but by divine love, and ask yourself, What does the cross proclaim? The sacred Book in which the story of this amazing revelation of divine love is found teaches that, in that supremely mysterious hour of vicarious suffering on the cross, in the mind of the all-wise, loving and holy God-man's unsolvable problem—the forgiveness of sin, restoration and the salvation of the repentant sinner—was so fully solved that the incarnate Christ on the cross could cry, "*It is finished.*"

In that supreme hour, according to the Christian's Bible, through the sacrificial love of God in Christ, a full at-one-ment was so completely made that for all ages God's infinite love and righteousness are so fully declared that a holy God can remain forever holy and be the "just, and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus."

Therefore a divine, perfect, and all-sufficient Saviour for all men who will repent of their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus is the message of the cross "to all the nations," to the end that God the Father may not only give life but life abundant and eternal. The sufferings on the cross also express God's estimate of the divinity that is in humanity.

The Closing and Crowning Event

The whole scene changed, all darkness disappeared, for the vicarious suffering was over. Communion between the Divine Father and Son had been restored. Christ, no longer "forsaken," looked up and was greeted with perfect approval from God

the Father, and in words which cover the whole redemptive work for which the Sinless Incarnation came into the world, he cried, "*It is finished.*"

Just here I have always thought the artists have caught the conception of painting the head of the Lord Jesus radiant with a crown of glory. He had completed a perfect salvation for a lost world. "A full at-one-ment was made." Then, the Lord Jesus, as the "second Adam," the representative man, in words that throw more authoritative light on the mystery and meaning of death and the future life than all others of all literature, said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

CHAPTER VII

FROM BURIAL TO ASCENSION

THE following full and inspired record of the burial of the Lord Jesus perfects the evidence that he was in very truth dead, and buried; and after the story of his miraculous resurrection presents the first step in "God's exaltation of Jesus":

And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed.

And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulcher.

Now on the morrow, which is *the day* after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.¹

¹ Matt. 27. 57-66.

The Resurrection

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.²

I shall here add the testimony of Paul in an historical summary of Christ's appearances before his ascension, written for the strengthening of the faith of the church at Corinth. Paul had been a persecutor, but now Jesus accepted him, he was forgiven, received the Holy Spirit and became the great Apostle to the Gentiles. It is this same Paul who writes thus:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures: and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles. And last of all, . . . he appeared to me also.³

This means, a living Christ for a dying world.

² Matt. 28. 1-6.

³ 1 Cor. 15. 3-8.

“Sing above the battle strife,
Jesus saves, Jesus saves!
By his death and endless life,
Jesus saves, Jesus saves!
Sing it softly through the gloom,
When the heart for mercy craves;
Sing in triumph o’er the tomb,
Jesus saves, Jesus saves!”

The Forty Days Before the Ascension

“God’s exaltation of Jesus” includes forty days and nights after the resurrection of Jesus, and before his ascension into heaven. The appearances and teaching of the Master during this period are steps in Christ’s exaltation, that “gave him the name which is above every name.” I will give but a brief outline of those matchless days and refer the reader to the Gospels for the fuller record.

The Mountain Interview, With the Eleven Alone

But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped *him*; but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.⁴

The Last Interview and Parting Instructions Which Contain the Missionary Commission

He said unto them, Thus it is written, that the

⁴ Matt. 28. 16-20.

Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.⁵

God's Exaltation of Jesus Completed

"And he led them out until *they were* over against Bethany," the town in which Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

My Personal Testimony

When I was in the Holy Land, and on the brow of the mount which overlooks Bethany, I am sure I stood on or near the exact spot where Jesus stood when "He lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven."

How can I ever describe the joy, inspiration, and strengthened assurance of the historical accuracy of the sacred record, when with my own eyes I saw that the plains, rivers, hills, cities, and towns named in the New Testament records are still there—and when my feet stood on the very mount, and I believe near the very spot, from which Jesus ascended into heaven?

There is no greater law in the material universe than gravitation. When Jesus without wings on which to soar, or heavenly chariot in which to ride, moved up through space, and heaven "stooped in luminous cloud and robed him for enthronement,"

⁵Luke 24. 46-49.

and the Father said, "Let all the angels of God worship him," then the material universe and the heavenly world "crowned him Lord of all." In heaven he ever lives as "King of kings and Lord of lords," returned as God to where he was before his sinless incarnation. The seven steps in Christ's exaltation as he triumphantly walks back to where he was before his humiliation are here given as Paul gives them:

1. God highly exalted him.
2. Gave unto him the name.
3. Which is above every name.
4. In the name of Jesus every knee should bow.
5. Of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth.
6. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
7. To the glory of God the Father.

His Promised Return

And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.⁶

This agrees completely with Christ's own statements concerning his return.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.⁷

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then

⁶ Acts 1. 10, 11.

⁷ John 14. 3.

shall he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.⁸

⁸ Mark 13. 26, 27.

CHAPTER VIII

"THAT YE MIGHT BE RICH"

"That ye through his poverty might become rich."

We have seen that we cannot form a proper estimate of how poor Christ became except in contrast with how rich he was; neither can we comprehend the riches of the saved in Christ, except in contrast with the poverty and slavery of sin. I have filled up Paul's outline of how Christ became poor from the gospel records. I will now present Paul's own statement of his slavery in sin, which one who is a competent judge says, "is certainly the most terrible tragedy in all literature, ancient or modern, sacred or profane." All Shakespeare's tragedies are mere stage plays, when compared with Paul's fight for liberty as a slave in sin. His conflict went beyond all that pertains to the body; heaven and hell met in a last grapple for everlasting possession of his immortal soul. Here is Paul's description:

For that which I do, I know not; for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?¹

"The body of this death." This is an allusion to

¹ Rom. 7. 15, 16, 19, 20, 24.

the unspeakably horrible custom by which some ancient tyrants put their enemies to death, and represents Paul's conception of the condition of the sinner without a Saviour, in "the body of sin." They bound a dead body to a living man, hand to hand, face to face, and obliged him to carry this horror until it brought death to him. Virgil graphically describes the gruesome punishment in his account of the tyrant Mezentius. A translation reads:

"What tongue can such barbarities record,
Or count the slaughters of his ruthless sword?
'Twas not enough the good, the guiltless bled;
Still worse, he bound the living to the dead;
These, limb to limb, and face to face, he joined.
Oh, monstrous crime of unexampled kind!
Till choked with stench, the lingering wretches
lay,
And in the loathed embraces died away."

This is a true picture of Paul's hopeless struggle in and through himself with sin; and who that has earnestly striven to live a sinless life has not had a similar experience? The whole human race, made in the image of God, had fallen into the slavery of sin. It is this fact that brought Christ to the cross; sin is the only, yet an all-sufficient, explanation. But when Paul received personal salvation through the crucified Christ, what a victory was his! Hear him, in contrast with slavery in the "body of sin":

I THANK GOD, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.
. . . THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN
CHRIST JESUS MADE ME FREE FROM THE
LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.

A Calcutta Leper

As an illustration, I will relate an experience that may be seen any day in India: Once a prominent American minister, in our home in Calcutta, said, “I want to see a leper asylum.” I took him to the government leper asylum of that great city. As we passed around among its inmates, most of whom were Indians, in all the loathsome stages of a lingering death, we saw among many Indians a little European boy of about twelve years of age, with light hair and blue eyes and wearing only a dhoti (loin cloth). His face, shoulders, arms, hands and skin were bare and as pure and clean as those of an infant. I asked, “My boy, why are you here?” His lips quivered, the tears rolling down his face. He was unable to answer with words, but he turned up the bottom of his right foot, and there just under the great toe was a blotch of real leprosy. Because of that one spot he was turned out of his home and forced to live as an outcaste among lepers.

Later I heard that the one leprous spot had spread over his whole body, in its repulsive manner, and had caused his death. Yet, leprosy with all its loathsomeness, can kill only the body; but sin “destroys both body and soul in hell.” Suppose I could have told that dear boy of a great physician who would perfectly cure him, on the one and only condition that he would be willing to forsake his leprosy, don’t you think he would have gladly and quickly gone to him?

The Great Physician

I present to you that Great Physician of the soul,

of whom the angel said, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." What will you do? Will you come to him?

How Rich!

Hear what John, the disciple whom Christ loved, says about how rich a pardoned soul will become:

Beloved, now are we children of God; and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.²

Think of the glory of being forever like him, and seeing him, not as he was, but as he is, restored to the glory that he had with the Father before the world was!

The poorest man, woman, or child that I have ever baptized in India—and I have baptized the poorest of the poor—if he or she truly receives the Lord Jesus Christ, will become rich enough to be with Jesus and like him, and able to sing a song of redeeming love that the angels cannot sing. This is the message of love. Do you wonder that Paul, the first great missionary, said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

A Heavenly Trance

I remember hearing of a saint who, taken in a trance into heaven, and moving down the golden streets of the glorious city, came into the presence of a woman of marvelous spiritual beauty and

²John 3. 2.

heavenly glory. He was overawed by her presence, yet he stopped and asked,

"Who were you on earth?"

"Who do you think I was?" she answered.

Then he named various saintly women of the Bible, but she answered, "No."

"Then," he said, "were you Mary the mother of our Lord?"

She said, "No, no!"

Then he asked again, "Who were you?"

And she answered, "I was Mary Magdalene, from whom the Lord Jesus cast out seven devils."

This is but the story of vision, but I think it very faintly suggests all that God has prepared for every believer in the Christ "who became poor that ye might become rich."

CHAPTER IX

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I CLOSE, for three reasons, with a personal testimony. First, "Ye are my witnesses" is Christ's farewell commission to his disciples, and the witnessing of those who have found his promises true is Christ's chief provision for the spread of his kingdom. Second, that it may help to make clear that Jesus Christ is not someone away off two thousand years ago, but that he is as real to those who believe in him now as he was when in physical presence upon earth. Thirdly, that those who read may know that I have not written in any merely professional manner, but out of a joyous, helpful, experimental acquaintance with Jesus as a personal, ever-present Saviour, and with the hope that because of this what I have written may be more helpful to others. I shall therefore begin by telling that, in answer to the prayers of godly parents, the Holy Spirit in my early youth in a very powerful manner gave me a personal, powerful

Conviction of Sin

As a boy a sense of sin was very real to me. I often felt as if a real physical load was weighing me down. In a book called "The Pilgrim's Progress," there is a story and also a picture of a man whose sins were tied on his back as a great burden, which fell off when he saw Christ on the cross. I had as a boy a very similar experience. I was helped

through the truth contained in the great Christian hymn which sets forth the intercession of Christ Jesus between his ascension and his coming again. It begins:

“Arise, my soul, arise;
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears:
Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on his hands.”

I knew that this was true to the teaching of the Bible, for it says, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Oh, the comfort I found in the second stanza, describing the intercession of Jesus before the throne!—

“He ever lives above,
For me to intercede;
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood, to plead;
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.”

I was also sure that the continuation of the description of Christ’s heavenly intercession was true to Bible teaching, which is:

“It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

For it continued:

“Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me:

'Forgive him, O forgive,' they cry,
'Nor let that ransomed sinner die!'"

For Charlie's Sake

I had heard a story which as a boy helped me to interpret and apply the teaching of this whole hymn, which describes Christ's heavenly intercession. I know that the earthly father in the story does not fully represent the heavenly Father in whose love originated all the matchless ministry of Christ. Nevertheless, though the story falls short of the love of our heavenly Father, yet, in my boyhood it helped me, and I tell it with the hope it may help others. Here is the story as I heard it when a boy:

There was once a poor old soldier whose story illustrates the above stanza and the one that follows. This old soldier had been wounded, had grown feeble; yet, in his old age, nursed other soldiers who were in hospital. There was a rich man whose soldier son, Charlie, the old soldier had nursed. One day the old soldier, on his way home, came into a rich man's compound begging, but could get no help. He pleaded his own merits, saying that he had been a soldier, and showed his wounds: but the old man called him a "beggar" and ordered him to go away. Then the old soldier thought of showing a letter Charlie had given him, to see if that would help. So he handed it to the rich man. Though the soldier knew it not, the rich man was Charlie's father. The father with uncontrollable emotion saw Charlie's hand-writing, and read,

Dear father:

This poor old soldier nursed me when I was wounded, and did much for me. Will you help him for Charlie's sake?

When the father came to "for Charlie's sake," he ran, caught the old man in his arms, kissed him, took him into his home, gave him Charlie's bedroom and Charlie's place at the table.

Instead of "for Charlie's sake," I used to pray "for Jesus' sake." This greatly helped me to understand and apply to myself the following stanza:

"The Father hears him pray,
His dear Anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of his Son;
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God."

Notwithstanding all this, I was "slow of heart to believe." The question would often arise: Do you know, are you sure you have ever been born from above? Then there would be doubts. But one day, while I was looking by faith toward the cross, there seemed to float out before me in the air, in illuminated letters, the very core of the gospel of Jesus, and in his own words, in answer to the question of Nicodemus concerning being "born from above." "How can these things be?"

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

I clearly saw that I was included in the "who-soever" and ceased to doubt.

Suddenly and gloriously God's Spirit came down from above and entered into my spirit, and bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God—an heir and a “joint heir with Jesus Christ.” Then suddenly I received a joy, greater, fuller, richer, and more satisfying than I can express in words. I could sing the hymn from that time on as a precious personal experience, as all mine, clear through to the very end:

“My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, ‘Father, Abba, Father,’ cry.”

I was under seventeen years of age when I first received that joyous experience. I am over seventy now, and have never doubted since. It becomes more and more precious with advancing years. To any sin-burdened heart, my heart in love would say:

“Oh that my Jesus
Were your Jesus too!”

Wipe the Blood From His Brow

The story is told of an artist who painted a wonderful picture of Jesus. A college president, a great lover of art, went to see the picture and took with him his little daughter. The artist had painted Christ with the crown of thorns on his head and wearing the scarlet robe of mockery. He had also painted a cruel Roman soldier standing at a distance, and who, with the end of an outstretched

pole, was pressing the crown of thorns down into the holy brow of the Lord Jesus. The father was so completely absorbed in admiring the perfection of every detail in the picture that, for a time, he wholly forgot his little daughter. When he turned and looked to see how it had impressed her, he saw the tears rolling down her face while she was holding up to her father in her little right hand her pocket handkerchief and saying:

"Papa, papa, take this and wipe the blood from his brow."

Dear reader, you must either go through life like the soldier in the picture, pressing the thorns deeper into the bleeding brow of the sinless Jesus, or, like the little girl, wiping the blood from his holy brow. Which will you do? Ask yourself when you are alone with Jesus.

Shall I Fail Him?

"Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work
to-day;

He has no feet but our feet to lead man in his way;
He has no tongues but our tongues to tell men how
he died;

He has no help but our help to bring them to his
side.

"What if our hands are busy with other work than
his?

What if our feet are walking where sin's allure-
ment is?

What if our tongues are speaking of things his lips
would spurn?

How can we hope to help him and hasten his
return?"

Shall you not, rather, reverently kneel down and make a personal covenant with Jesus Christ, saying:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love, so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all”?

[illegible]

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